Friendship forged by Q Part II

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Summary: Renegade Q tries to interfere with Hercules and Iolaus' friendship.

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Title: Friendship Forged by Q/ Part II

Hercules/Voyager/crossover

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Summary: Renegade Q seeks to destroy the Federation by breaking up the friendship between Hercules and Iolaus. Q sends his half Q, half-human son Chang to Earth to make sure Hercules and Iolaus live to build and found Starfleet...first Iolaus must survive his childhood....

Author's note: This story is a sequel to Frienship Forged by Q It is best for the reader to read Friendship Forged by Q first before reading this story.

Chapter 1

Somewhere in the Q continuum....

The Q continuum is boring. There is always nothing to do. The other Q just lounge about with an absolute air of boredom. Since becoming immortal, nothing excites the Q continuum anymore. There are no more conquests..no more struggles to be had..The Q continuum do not care if it lived or died..since the Q do not die...what's there to fight for anymore? Nothing...The other Q spend eternity contempling the nothingness of the universe....The Renegade Q, or as his friends call

him.."The Dark Entity" is BORED. The Renegade Q is especially bothered by his brother Q...Q still has fun...whilst the Renegade Q no longer knows how....enraged with jealousy at Q's apparent happiness...the Renegade Q decides to destroy Q's happiness at all costs.....

Q also is bored by the Q continuum but unlike his brother the Renegade Q who wallows in the self-pity of his nothingness..Q seeks out the excitement of mortals..for mortals are fun...they have spunk..especially Picard who talks back to Q..Q has children..first a half-mortal..half Q child named Chang...and of course his child by Lady Q..little q for which Captain Janeway is the stepmother.....Life is never boring with half Q children, a child and mortals to protect thought Q...

The Renegade Q especially hates his brother Q. Ever since his brother Q, had children the Renegade Q is disgusted at how soft Q has become. Once Q was the destroyer of civlizations...but now Q has become..well..sappy...Yes..thinks the Renegade Q..I must do something to bring Q down a notch...yes..that's it..destroy his precious Federation...I'll start with destroying the friendship between Iolaus and Hercules...Yes..the founders of Starfleet..I'll start first with Iolaus...destroying Iolaus will destroy Q's Starfleet....and Q's happiness....now THAT would be fun.....

Q and the Renegade Q have an argument.....

"You know Q...you've become rather soft since having that half-breed Chang...we used to roam the galaxies snuffing out whole civilizations..just what do you see in these pathetic mortals anyway and their stupid Federation?" asked Renegade Q

"Having children gives you a different perspective on things. Besides these mortals are not "pathetic"..they are very interesting...Darla..the mother of Chang was ever so beautiful..she had long dark hair..alluring brown eyes..charming laugh..I loved her..tell me Renegade Q..have YOU ever loved anyone besides yourself?" quipped Q

"LOVE" does not exist..you really have gone soft...I will prove to you once and for all that these mortals are a lower species and do NOT merit the attention of a Q...I will show you how insignificant these mortals are by destroying your precious Federation...I will start by destroying the mortals that started the Federation...Iolaus and Hercules...threatened the Renegade Q

You will not hurt my children..said Q..I will not allow it..I will be damned if you let anything happen to Iolaus or to the Federation...said Q

Really brother..no need to get so melodramatic...I will bring Iolaus down if it's the last thing I do..I just have to make Iolaus think he is worthless...his father being such a brute has already started this process...once Iolaus thinks he is worthless he will never be the hero to save Hercules and the Federation...it's really a simple plan..said the Renegade Q

I will NOT let you hurt Iolaus...I will succeed.. I will prove to you and to the whole damn Q continnuum that humans are the future of our race..it is their vitality..their optimism..that will save our race

from this eternal boredom we have languished into..I will not let you hurt the human race...My son and I will stop you..we will protect Iolaus..COUNT ON THAT! said Q

You haven't even told your son, Chang why you kidnapped him from U.S.S. Voyager..Chang doesn't even know why he is on Earth..some father you are...laughed the Renegade Q

My son is intelligent..he will understand that I am teleporting him only at important moments in young Iolaus' life...after all Chang is half-Q..I don't have to explain everything to him...defended Q

Back on Earth...

Iolaus relishes his new friendship with Hercules. For the first time, he has someone to play with..someone to joke with..someone to laugh with...Q is right....he and Hercules are destined for great adventures together...as heroes...as he walks home..he begins whistling..starts thinking about Q's prediction of his future together with Hercules...He loved kicking the butt of those bullies who were terrorizing the young 6 year old Hercules...and the look of gratitude in Hercules' eyes when Iolaus declared that he was Herc's new friend.....

Skouras comes home and is furious to find out that his son has been hanging around that half-breed bastard Hercules. He decides that night to give his son the beating of his life to persuade his son not to see Hercules anymore.

"Well, son...your mother has been telling me that you have been spending time with that worthless half-breed bastard Hercules...I don't want you consorting with that kind..do you hear? Skouras takes out his whip and starts his usual ranting and raving...Iolaus with tears in his cerulean blue eyes backs into a corner as Skouras advances with his whip screaming:

"You worthless piece of trash...how can you be my son! You are nothing but a crybaby! a runt! as Skouras mercilessly beat his son...red welts appear on Iolaus' back as Skouras continues to beat his son senseless. Iolaus bites his lower lip and never lets out a scream of pain as tears flow down his face...his curly unruly blond hair swathered in sweat..and blood....

"Please..Skouras..stop.you're hurting him...he's only a child...." cries Eurytheria..

"Shut up woman!..my son needs discipline..he needs to learn not to hang around that half mongrel Hercules...and that loose Alchemene who slept with someone other than her husband! Do I make myself clear..son..demands Skouras...

"He's only 8 years old..please Skouras.." pleads Eurytheria

Skouras looks at the unmoving body of his small son and slugs him off his lap in disgust.."Do you have dinner ready? I'm famished" exclaims Skouras. Iolaus gets off the floor..his back covered with welts, his body on fire..he runs out of the house into the street.

Iolaus thinks: I can never tell Hercules about this...No one can ever

know what a failure I am...No one must know that I am a failure to my father...a failure in everything...as he runs down an abandoned alley....

(Somewhere in the night..the Renegade Q laughs as he watches Iolaus suffer...Meanwhile, Q sends his half-Q son Chang down to Earth to make sure little Iolaus does not let his father's brutality hurt his soul.)

It is dark. Most everyone has gone to bed. The streets are deserted. Little Iolaus never having been alone in the streets before, feels scared and alone. Shivering with cold and fear, little Iolaus starts to cry his knees huddled to his chest. He just knows he can't go home. Not with his father at home.

After eating a good dinner, Chang wanders down a lonely alley. He hears the whimpering of a small boy. There in a corner cold and frigthtened, sits little Iolaus. Tears coming down his face, his blond ringlets wet with tears and sweat. Chang instantly recognizes Iolaus..the same little boy..he had seen earlier that day and whom he had introduced to a six year old Hercules (see previous story)..To his horror, he notices the dishevelled state of Iolaus' clothing..as well as the welts on the boy's back...Chang is in shock....and he thinks: How can anyone be so cruel to such a little boy?

Chang put his hands on the young boy's back and promptly uses his Q powers to heal the angry welts on little Iolaus' back. Face bathed in sweat. Golden hair matted. Blue eyes closed. Little Iolaus looks the picture of vulnerability and innocence. Tears of compassion runs down the young Q's face as he realizes the pain this boy is suffering..not just the physical..but also the unseen scars on Iolaus' soul.

"Feeling better?" asked Q

"Yeah..the pain is gone..did you heal me ? asked little Iolaus

"Yes, I did.." answered Q calmly..."Can you tell me what happened?"

"Well, you have to promise not to tell Hercules..Father got mad at me because I made friends with Hercules...He called Hercules all kinds of names...I couldn't stand it..Hercules is my friend...I don't care if Hercules is a half-God..I can't understand father's hatred...cried Iolaus.."is it me..was I a bad boy again? Iolaus starts sobbing....

"No, Iolaus..I think..you have a very generous heart..I want you to know that I am proud of you..that you are friends with Hercules.. I am proud that you followed your heart..I would be proud to have you for a son..Iolaus..said Q

Iolaus throws his arms around the younger Q and exclaims "I wish you were my father..I love you..Chang.." as little Iolaus wraps his arms around Chang's neck..the exhausted boy with the laughing blue eyes and curly moptop blond hair falls asleep. Chang walks towards the only home he knows Iolaus would be safe---- Alchemene's house--the mother of Hercules.....Chang thinks: I must find a safe haven for poor little Iolaus..Alchmene will take good care of him..and give the

boy what he needs the most...

Invisible to both Chang and Iolaus, Q appears before his son and says softly into the wind "I am proud of you, Chang..you will save the Federation.." and Q disappears in a flash of light.

Somewhere in the night..an angry Renegade Q watches in disgust and anger as that half bastard Q Chang saves Iolaus....again...

Chapter 2

Meanwhile on the Starship Voyager....

"Where are we?" asked Janeway

"Approximately 5,000 years in the past...it seems that Q has opened a wormhole allowing us to time-travel, Captain, replied Tuvok

"Captain, replied Ensign Kim, we are being hailed by the Q continuum.."

"Since when does the Q continuum hail us? Don't the Q just show up on the bridge? replied Janeway

As if summoned, Q appears on the bridge of Voyager and he informs the crew of Voyager why they are stuck in a wormhole.

"The Q continuum is continuing its sweep of this area. It seems that the renegade Q is here..We also think it's trying to change Earth's timeline..which is why we think..it has travelled back into the past..said Q

"What kind of game is this, Q" asked Janeway.."Why would this "renegade Q" want to change Earth's timeline?"

"The Renegade Q wants to destroy peace on Earth..for now my son..your Ensign Chang is maintaining Earth's timeline..if the Renegade Q succeeds in destroying peace on Earth, then the Federation would cease to exist..."said Q

"Okay Q..out with it...you KNOW more than you are saying..Q..COME OUT NOW! exclaimed Janeway in anger...

"In order for there to be peace on Earth, THEY must remain friends forever...then THEY will help found the Federation...save James T. Kirk's life....and help bring peace to the Alpha Quadrant to make Earth and the Starfleet the boring paradise that it is....drawls Q

"Q ,.who are THEY?" "What are you talking about?...Q...exclaimed a very frustrated Janeway.

"I'm sorry Catherine...urgent business elsewhere..I promise I will answer all your questions when I come back...you have my word... but I must leave now and with a flick of his finger...Q disappears in a flash before answering Janeway's question.

Q thought: I must make sure that my son, Chang protects Iolaus and that Hercules and Iolaus remain friends. I must get back to Earth

immediately..I don't have time to explain everything to Catherine...I can't let the Renegade Q win..Yes..I must keep an eye on my evil brother, the Renegade Q...at all costs..to save Iolaus is to save the Federation....

Senior Staff meeting

Janeway paces the room as she decides to tell the senior staff the gravity of the situation. Seated in the conference room is: Chakotay, Tuvok, Paris, Torres, Kim, the Doctor, and Seven of Nine.

"We do not know who or what this renegade Q is. . Q also believes that the renegade Q seeks to destroy the peace Earth has worked so hard to accomplish by changing Earth's timeline. For now, that's all we know of the situation..remarked Janeway.

"I have a theory Captain, mused Tuvok "in order for the Renegade Q to destroy peace on Earth...the Renegade Q must change Earth history...I think he is changing Earth history by interfering in the lives of Earth's greatest peacemakers...

"If they can destroy or kill Earth's greatest peacemakers..boom no more peace on Earth..there would be nothing but war and chaos..interrupted Lieutenant Torres...

Janeway paces the room with a thoughtful look on her face as she continues "Seven of Nine, look up Starfleet database of Earth's greatest peacemakers...send the information to my ready room...I want to know why the Renegade Q went to Ancient Greece..Find out the greatest peacemakers of this era....and start with Greece...

"Yes Captain"..replied Seven of Nine

"Chakotay..I want you to contact the Q continuum and once I have a list of possible targets..I want you to tell the Q continnuum to place a Q as a bodyguard to all of Earth's greatest peacemakers throughout history...continued Janeway

"Yes Captain" replied Chakotay

"Ensign Kim..keep on eye on Ensign Chang's life signs and if ANYTHING happens you tell me right away...ordered Janeway..."

"Yes Captain" replied Ensign Kim

"B'alanna..make sure that the transporter are online and functioning so we can lock onto Ensign Chang in case of an emergency...

"Oh, yes..one additional thing..Seven of Nine..monitor Earth and make sure that the timeline is remaining stable...alright now that everyone has their duty shifts..meeting dismissed.

After checking up on Earth, Q reappears in front of Catherine Janeway in a Starfleet Admiral's uniform in Janeway's ready room. As promised, Q proceeds to tell Janeway the rest of the story.

"I'm sorry Catherine to disappear on you like that but..now I will tell you everything...I first of all, Ensign Chang is alright...says Q.

Relieved at hearing that her youngest officer is not in harm's way, Janeway becomes curious as to what's going on..."I'm glad to hear that Ensign Chang has not been injured. I've been so worried about him...Now, Q,What exactly is going on? asks Janeway...

"The Renegade Q, my brother is trying to destroy the Federation. He is doing this by going back to Greece to break up the greatest friendship of all time..the friendship between Hercules and Iolaus..You see Catherine..the Renegade Q has figured out that if he can break up Hercules and Iolaus' friendship..then Hercules and Iolaus are not there to help James Cochrane invent the warp core..Hercules and Iolaus are not there to save James T. Kirk's life...Hercules and Iolaus must remain friends so that Starfleet can be founded..." says Q

"I see, let me get this straight...Ensign Chang is on the planet surface..protecting Hercules and Iolaus from this Renegade Q...so that Starfleet will exist?..so you're saying you teleported Chang and Voyager back in time to save our future? inquires Janeway...

"Yes, Catherine..both Chang and I are going to do our best to make sure there is a future..says Q finally...I mean without the Federation...I would not have Lady Q and little q...You would not be the stepmother of q...please be patient, Catherine...I will personally guarantee that Renegade Q does NOT succeed! I will save mankind's future! I promise you that Catherine!

Chapter 3

Chang knocks on Alchemene's door carrying the still form of little Iolaus in his arms. It is the middle of the night. Alchemene in her nightgown and robe answers the door rubbing the sleep out of her eyes.

"Hello..sorry to disturb you this late at night..my name is Chang..this little boy needs a place to sleep for the night...I thought perhaps since you're Hercules' mother..you might..

"Oh my God..Iolaus..! as Alchemene bends down to carry Iolaus into her arms..."What happened to you"..your clothes are all torn....tears running down her face...

"Oh Alchemene..as Iolaus awakens...he leaps into her arms and weeps tears of joy...

"I found Iolaus in the alley...I did my best as a healer to heal the wounds on his back. Earlier in the day..I saw Skouras beat Iolaus up...said the younger Q

"Oh my God..as Alchemene lifts Iolaus shirt only to discover old and newer looking scars of whip marks crisscrossing little Iolaus' back.....I just can't believe Skouras would do this...said Alchmene in shock...

"Iolaus made me promise not to tell Hercules..I think Iolaus is ashamed of why Skouras beat him..you see Skouras doesn't want Iolaus to be friends with Hercules..but little Iolaus can't understand why Skouras hates Hercules...Iolaus just sees the good in people...nothing more...I can read Iolaus' soul..he has a pure and innocent soul..he doesn't see Hercules as a half-God..just as another

human being...Iolaus will be a great hero someday...said the younger Q quite simply..

"I know..Iolaus is unique..he is a kind boy who can see beyond the narrow-mindedness and prejudice of some people..don't worry Chang."for now, I won't tell Hercules about how Skouras feels about Iolaus' friendship.....but I will take care of Iolaus as if he were my own son....I promise you..I'll keep him safe...said Alchmene

Before Chang knew it..his father Q was calling for him. Chang felt himself envelopped in a warm glow of light. He disappears from Alchemene's sight.

Many years pass, but the friendship between Hercules and Iolaus grow. Despite the fact that all the other boys in the neighborhood shun Hercules..Iolaus only loves him more. Hercules and Iolaus pass much time together fishing, hunting and laughing together..they are like twin brothers inseparable until the day Hercules leaves for Cheiron's Academy.

"Don't worry Iolaus..I'll be back on vacations..Mother wants me to learn to be a warrior..she thinks it's important for my future...as Hercules' azure eyes pleads for understanding...

"I'll be alright Herc..after all Achmene is here to give me all the free meals I need..I'll be just fine says Iolaus not very convincingly as it pierces his soul that Hercules would soon be leaving him behind but he wasn't able to let Hercules know his pain.

"It'll be fun with you gone..I mean I'll have the fishing hole all to myself now..no more Hercules scaring the fish away ..No more Hercules..scaring the game away when I hunt..with the many branches you snap..the deer can hear us from eons away..guffawed Iolaus.

Hercules impulsively hugged Iolaus and said "I will miss you Iolaus.."

Iolaus with his face red and his eyes carefully studying his feet just added "Yeah Herc, I'll miss you too..."

Q watches over Hercules and Iolaus. He makes sure that his brother Renegade Q does not interfere. However, Q thinks: When Hercules leaves for the Academy, I'd better send Chang down as an invisible observer to make sure the Renegade Q doesn't use Hercules' departure as an opportnity to hurt Iolaus....but first I must tell Chang how important his mission on Earth will be.....

Chapter 4

"You know Q..I am tired of this game..why am I on Earth? What is it I'm supposed to accomplish? said Chang

"Actually..you're doing quite well..you're maintaining Earth's timeline..said Q

"What timeline? asked the younger Q

"Your mission all along has been to make sure Iolaus and Hercules become friends. Eventually, they become Earth's greatest peacemakers..without this friendship..Earth has no future..no peace..no Starfleet said Q..

"You mean that's what the Renegade Q has been trying to do all along..disrupt the lives of Hercules and Iolaus to destroy any chance Earth ever has of becoming paradise..said the younger Q incredibly...

"Yes, that's correct. Janeway has made a list of all other peacemakers that the Renegade Q may have targeted..the Q continuum has placed a Q next to all these peacemakers throughout time...said Q..everyone, the Q continuum, Voyager...we're all working together to ensure Earth's future..Voyager and her crew are on standby alert..said Q

Before Q could continue, he transports his son back to Earth to save Iolaus' life and to prevent the Renegade Q from taking advantage of a young and lonely Iolaus.

At 14 years of age, Iolaus is still small of stature but he is quick on his feet. Iolaus misses Hercules since the latter has left for Cheiron's Academy. After all, reasons Iolaus, Hercules is going to grow up to be a hero...so he doesn't need me, Iolaus, the common thief, around anymore to sully his reputation...Thank God,. Skouras is never home anymore. I certainly don't miss the beatings.....the only family I've ever known has been Hercules and Alchemene..and that strange half Q..Chang.....

Renegade Q appears invisibly...he thinks: This will be a good time to bring Iolaus down. With Hercules at the Academy, Iolaus is all alone and vulnerable. It will be easy to make Iolaus think he's worthless...his father beats him..so Iolaus can no longer go to Hercules' house for protection...Yes, with Iolaus on the streets..this is a good time to get Iolaus in trouble...maybe jail...Yes, I can definitely see Starfleet's best..as jailbait...seethes Renegade Q....putting Iolaus in jail will definitely defeat my brother's Q precious Federation....and destroy his happiness thinks a jealous Renegade Q....

"Iolaus, I'm hungry...said a young girl huddled in the alley....

"Don't worry, Lisa, stay by me..here..have some of my bread..remember to tell the others NOT to go near the grownups..at this time of night..these grownups are dangerous..said a very tired and hungry Iolaus...

"Why are the grownups dangerous?" asked a innocent Lisa..her green eyes frightened and scared..her long red hair matted and dirty...

"Just trust me..okay..Lisa..I'll take care of you..I'll make sure nobody hurts you..beats you...and tomorrow..Cradus and the gang..we have a big heist planned so you won't go hungry..now Lisa..put your head on my shoulder...I'll sing you a lullaby...said Iolaus, his blue cerulean eyes tears as he thinks how brutally Lisa's parents used to treat her before they died...

The heist goes as planned. The ring is located in the jeweller's window. Cradus distracts the jeweller while Iolaus takes the ruby ring while the jeweller is looking away.It's an easy heist just like all the others. Iolaus has gotten a reputation for being quite the thief. Iolaus thinks to himself..I just hope I don't run into Hercules or Alchemene..they would be ashamed of me..they just wouldn't understand.....

"Iolaus..do you have the ruby ring..whispered Cradus into Iolaus' ear...as the two boys stand together in the marketplace...

"Yeah, the jeweller..has no idea what hit him..come on..let's run before the magistrate's guard catches up with us...said Iolaus readying to run....

Suddenly there is a commotion coming from behind the marketplace. Smoke billows from a nearby roof. A house is on fire. A small child is stuck inside the house.

"Please can someone help me..my daughter..she's still in the house..it's burning..the fire..the smoke..I couldn't get to her..cried the father as tears gathered on his grimy smoke-filled face....please help me!

Without thinking twice about his own safety, Iolaus runs to the burning house. He can hear the young girl's screams for help.Iolaus jumps right into the fire. Acrid smoke burns Iolaus' lungs. The flames lap at Iolaus' skin. Iolaus sees a young girl too terrified to move..he reassures the girl.. and brings the little girl out safe and sound...

"Oh, Elise, honey..I thought you had burned..thank the Gods you are alive...Oh young man..how can I ever thank you for saving my daughter's life" said the father.

Just then, the magistrate's guards catches up with Iolaus...The guards see Iolaus on the verge of running but Iolaus stops as he stares into the innocent eyes of the little girl he just saved. Iolaus stares at the ruby ring in his hand..and he thinks: This ruby ring will feed alot of hungry children tonight...I'm not stealing it for me..I'm stealing this ring for them..for the hungry...for the little ones who cry in the night...for them...yet that litlle girl thinks I'm a thief..maybe if I give back the ring..she'll think I'm a hero..no..I must feed the hungry children..what to do? .thought a confused Iolaus...Instead of running, Iolaus stares at the ring in his hand..and stands confused while the guards rapidly approach Iolaus..meanwhile Cradus and the rest of the other thieves scatter.....Iolaus stands..looking at the ring..looking at the girl.....

The guards sees Iolaus standing in the middle of the square with the ruby ring in his hand. The jeweller approaches the guard to incriminate the thief and prevent Iolaus from getting away...the jeweller says to the approaching guards....

"Stop that man..he's a thief...he's the one who stole my ruby ring from the jeweller....cried the Jeweller..."That's the man..officer..that's Iolaus..part of the Cradus gang..they've been stealing from all the merchants..I want my ruby ring back..hand it back to me young man...cried the jeweller...caught redhanded a

shamefaced Iolaus hands the ruby ring back to the jeweller...

"Wait..officer..you must be mistaken..this young man is a hero..he just saved my daughter's life..this must be a mistake..insisted the father..

"Father..don't let them take the nice boy away..I like him...Please father DO SOMETHING! That young boy saved my life!...He risked his own life for me! implored Elise.

"Officer..it seems that the young man has returned the ring..you don't have to arrest him..officer please..he saved my daughter's life..officer.leave the young man alone..he's a hero....insisted the father...

The Renegade Q steps up to the officer and whispers in his ear: Arrest Iolaus..he's a common thief..he has stolen from all the merchants..spare him no mercy..ignore the father's pleas..Iolaus has made fools of all you guards..Put Iolaus in jail where he belongs...

The officer listens to and obeys the silent pleadings of Renegade Q as he proceeds to arrest Iolaus. The officer chains Iolaus and shoves him into the cell with such force that Iolaus sits up in the cell.. and sees stars....

"You..little brat..have been making fools out of me and the guards..the Magistrate will throw the book at you...I hope you rot in jail..said the guard as he closes the jail door.

Renegade Q laughs as he sees the look of shame cross Iolaus' face at being arrested and thrown in jail.Oh..thought Renegade Q..this is too easy..Iolaus will think he is not worthy to stand beside Hercules..being a common thief...yes..my plan is going well....Iolaus will be out of the way...ha ha ha..the Federation is as good as dead... as Renegade Q gleefully exits the scene.....

Q makes sure his brother has left the scene. He quickly sneaks in Chang to rescue Iolaus' self-esteem while Iolaus sits in jail awaiting trial. Q thinks: I will not let my brother win..Iolaus has a heart of gold and Chang will see to it that Iolaus becomes the hero that he is destined to become..side by side with Hercules...thought Q...

With a flash of his hand, Q sends his half-Q son, Chang to talk to Iolaus and to keep him company in jail. In the meantime, Q thinks: I must tell Hercules and Alchmene and others about Iolaus' predicament. ..I will not let the evil of Renegade Q..destroy the future...

Iolaus sits down on the cot and thinks dejectedly...Q..Hercules..Alchemene..they were all wrong..I am not a hero...Father was right..I am nothing but a failure..a runt..a common thief..if Hercules could see me now..he wouldn't want to be my friend now as hot tears poured down his cheeks--tears of shame.

"You are wrong, Iolaus..you are a hero..you were only trying to feed your family..take care of those little children..protect them...you ..said Chang gently as he appeared in a blue flash of light in front

of Iolaus. Startled out of his reflections, Iolaus stares at Chang in surprise. Iolaus impulsively gives Chang a hug..."Oh Chang..I'm so glad to see you..but ...

"Chang..you once told me I was destined to be a hero..I'm no hero..just a common thief in jail...said Iolaus dejectedly...

"That's not true..that's your father talking...that's what Skouras wants you to believe..Iolaus..you saved that little girl's life..you rushed into that burning house without even thinking about your own safety..you are a hero....said Chang gently.

."..but Chang..I'm in trouble..jail..they're going to lock me up and throw away the key..when my father finds out...he's really going to be mad...said Iolaus.....

"Don't worry Iolaus..your true friends will stand by you....come on Iolaus..get some sleep..said Chang as he watched the small vulnerable form fall asleep on the jail cot, he pushed away the stray blond locks from Iolaus' forehead and sang an ancient lullaby to lull the blond teen into a deeper sleep....

Chang thought: Q, hurry please..find Iolaus' friends...get him out of jail..the fate of the Federation..lies in this young boy's hands...please help him father..as sleep claims the younger Q..he can't help but worry about the future...

Chapter 5--The Trial

While the younger Q keeps Iolaus company in jail, the elder Q appears in a flash of light in front of Alchemene as she is tending her garden. Alchemene sees a blue flash of light out of the corner of her eye. Thinking it is Zeus coming for a visit, she turns around from her garden...

"Look Zeus..if you're here to see Hercules, he's at Cheiron's Academy..but before she could finish her sentence..she realized that the figure before her is a totally unfamiliar God....who are you? said Alchemene..

"Hello, my name is Q..of the Q continuum..I haven't come here because of Hercules..I've come here because of Iolaus..he's in trouble..and he needs your help...you see Iolaus is in jail..he needs you to testify on his behalf..." said Q in a neutral arrogant tone.

"Oh my God..Iolaus in jail..I knew this would happen eventually..he's been hanging around with that gang...Cradus is such a bad influence on Iolaus...Iolaus is such a good boy at heart..please Q take me to Iolaus..pleaded Alchemene...

"Of course..step this way.." said Q and in a flash of blue light..he deposits Alchemene to the courthouse.

Hercules had just woken up. He rubs the sleep out of his eyes when out of the corner of his eye he sees a blue flash of light. His muscles tense as he figures it would be Ares coming back again to pick a fight with him...

"Jason..wake up..everyone wake up...we must prepare for battle..Ares

is coming" screamed Hercules...startled cadettes started waking up from their bunks...

"Ares..I have no time for this..bellowed Hercules into the ever increasing blue flash of light. Q appears and Hercules recognizes his mistake as he sees an unfamiliar God floating in front of his bunk.

"You're not Ares..who are you? asked Hercules..you don't feel like one of my relatives.."

"No, I am not related to you. My name is Q of the Q continuum. I am here because your friend Iolaus ,he needs your help..I mean you no harm..I am actually here to help you..come with me...we don't have time..Iolaus is in trouble....said Q urgently.....

Disregarding Q's arrogant stature he took in this unfamiliar God warily.."Take me to Iolaus then...what happened? Why is Iolaus in trouble? How can I help? asked Hercules in a panicked tone

"Iolaus is in jail...he has been accused of stealing a ruby ring..he is to be sentenced today if you do not stop dilly-dallying around and COME! said Q..I will teleport you directly to the courthouse..

"For Iolaus, I'll do anything...he's my best friend..he was always there for me..I'll be there for him..alright take me to Iolaus..said Hercules..Q deposits Hercules to the courthouse. As Q deposits Hercules on the courthouse, he thinks: Hercules is a true friend of Iolaus...I can see the loyalty and love in his eyes...yes..this friendship must be maintained at all costs...

A little girl is playing with her father. Bennius is relieved that his little girl, Elise, is still alive. Both Bennius and Elise are startled when Q appears in a flash of light.

"I don't have time to make introductions. Come, we must go to the courthouse..Iolaus is on trial and he will need your help..Q grabs hold of both father and child and instantly transports them to the courthouse....

Achmene, Hercules, Bennius and Elise sit on one side of the courtroom. The jeweller and the other merchants of Thebes sit on the other side of the courtroom as everyone awaits the arrival of Iolaus, Chang and the Magistrate. With chains clanking, Iolaus is brought in first. Head bowed in shame, the blond teen sits himself in front of the magistrate. The magistrate enters, his flowing robes touch the ground.

"Don't worry Iolaus..you'll get through this..remember that you are a good person..a person with a golden heart..you stole that ruby ring to help feed yourself..whispered Chang into Iolaus' ear.

"Chang..you are wrong..his blue eyes filling with tears of shame, I am a failure like my father says..I am just a common thief...that's all I am..all this talk about me being a hero..is just a bunch of bull....Hercules is the hero, not me...said Iolaus dejectedly

"You Iolaus, son of Skouras, stand accused of robbery...your sentence will be...before the magistrate could continue a blue flash of light

appeared in the courtroom as Q made his presence known.

"I beg to differ..said Q..this mortal is a hero..in the future..he will save many lives..he will be the best friend to Hercules...he is not to be sentenced..I forbid it..said Q

"Please..your magistrate..Iolaus is a hero..he's my best friend"said Hercules..Iolaus' jaw dropped as he realized that he was hearing Hercules' voice. Iolaus had been feeling so dejected that he had not even noticed Hercules and Alchemnene presence in the courtroom.!

Hercules continued "Iolaus is a loyal steadfast friend..when all the other boys shunned me..because I was born the son of Zeus..Iolaus stood by me..he stood up for me..he accepted me as a person...Please let Iolaus go...he has a good heart...

Before Hercules could finish his sentence..Alchemene stands up and continues where Hercules leaves off..".Iolaus is like a son to me...He and Hercules grew up together...He has helped Hercules fight off bullies...In the future, I will act as Iolaus' guardian..I will make sure he never steals again...if he apologizes and returns the ring...maybe work off his debt to the merchants..perhaps...."

Elise with tears in her eyes ran up to Iolaus. She looks up at Iolaus' face and sees those kind blue cerulean eyes with curly blond hair every which way....Elise says: Please your honor..he saved my life...he ran into the burning house...set him free..she then compulsively hugs Iolaus' leg refusing to let go as tears ran down her face.

The jeweller has had enough of these sappy scenes..he stands up angrily and adds "Your honor..Iolaus is a common thief..he has stolen from every merchant in the square..surely you're not going to allow your judgement to be swayed by these bystanders..a crime is a crime...finished the jeweller....

As the jeweller finishes his speech, a group of dirty looking hungry small children walks into the courtroom. A small girl approaches the bench.....

"If it weren't for Iolaus..my brothers and I would have gone hungry..every night..Iolaus would protect us from danger..he would feed us with bread and cheese..or whatever he had...please don't put Iolaus in jail...we need him...he's our friend.." said the little girl with tears streaking down her face.

Iolaus stands in front of the judge. Shamefaced, Iolaus bends down on his knees. His curly blond hair all over his face, Iolaus takes a moment to clear the unruly blond locks from his face as he looks at the magistrate and said "Your honor..I deserve whatever punishment you see fit to give me...I don't deserve these people's sympathy..I stole..I am a thief..do what you see fit..sir" says Iolaus as his cheeks flamed with red.

For the first time in many years, the magistrate is at a loss for words. This case is indeed unusual. Iolaus just isn't any thief..he is a thief who has actually saved a life..a thief who has fed hungry children..a thief whose best friend is the Son of Zeus..a thief defended by an unknown God Q..

"May I approach the bench your honor?." asked Alchemene..I have a proposition for you...let Iolaus go to Cheiron's Academy with my son, Hercules...I will make it my personal responsibility that Iolaus will never turn to thievery again.."

"You will NOT prosecute Iolaus...You will send him to Cheiron's Academy..you will obey me little mortal...I know what is right. I am Q..I am a God..If you send Iolaus to jail, you will disturb the timeline...Iolaus must stay with Hercules....said Q in a very arrogant tone.

For the first time, the Renegade Q made his presence known in the courtroom. He stared at his pathetic brother Q.and addressed the magistrate: "Iolaus is a common thief..you cannot even think of sending a common thief to Cheiron's Academy..he must pay for his crime..Iolaus deserves jail!..said the Renegade Q arrogantly...

Telepathically the Renegade Q communicates to his brother Q "You will not win Q..with Iolaus in jail...the friendship between Hercules and Iolaus is broken...without Iolaus to watch Hercules' back..Hera will eventually succeed in her attempt to kill Hercules..without Hercules and Iolaus' friendship..no Federation...no Starfleet....I will win Q...in a blue flash of light..the Renegade Q leaves the courtroom.

Concerned Chang turns to his father Q "You must do something..you cannot let the Renegade Q win...you must make the magistrate give Iolaus the chance to attend the Academy..so that Iolaus' friendship with Hercules can save Starfleet...Q..do something....

Without any hesitation, Q telepathically tells the magistrate what to do: YOU WILL GIVE IOLAUS THE CHOICE OF GOING TO CHEIRON'S ACADEMY OR GO TO JAIL...The magistrate hears Q's voice in his head and obeys. The magistrate clears his throat and announced the verdict.

"Iolaus, son of Skouras, you may rise...I give you a choice..either you go to Cheiron's Academy...or you go to jail..." said the magistrate sternly...

Surprised and relieved, Iolaus rises and with a catch in his throat, he says with a megawatt smile "Oh I'll gladly go to Cheiron's Academy..sir.."

The magistrate continued with the additional conditions of the sentence..he said: You must maintain good grades..pay your tuition..and attend all your classes or else you will end up back in jail..you are now on probation...is that clear young man?

Iolaus with a bright grin on his face said "Yes sir, Mr. Magistrate..Yes sir..." Hercules comes up to Iolaus and gives him a big bear hug....Iolaus practically bounces rather than walks out of the courtroom his twinkling blue cerulean eyes reflecting the happiness of his mood as the sun catches the golden highlights of his blond hair." "Herc..I can't believe I'm really free!..I'll be going to the Academy with you..I just can't believe it!" exclaims a jubilant Iolaus...

"Oh Iolaus..I can't wait to show you the Academy...we can be best friends again..back to back heroes like we used to talk about...you can meet Jason..and Lilith..and Cheiron...we'll have such fun....babbled Hercules excitedly.

"Oh Herc..it's great to have you back in my life..you can always count on me to cover your back..like you covered mine today...thanks..said Iolaus...

Renegade Q appears disgusted as he watches the joyful reunion of Hercules and Iolaus...He thinks...Yes, there will be a next time...that's the advantage of being Q..I have all eternity to destroy Starfleet...to destroy Iolaus and Hercules....as Renegade Q quietly exits the room...

Epilogue

"Good work..son..we've accomplished our mission for now..Iolaus is going to Cheiron's Academy..he becomes best friends with Hercules..so far so good..Hercules and Iolaus live to build the Federation...for now the timeline is safe....said Q

"What do you mean we've accomplished our mission "for now"..asked the Younger Q

"Oh the Renegade Q will not be pleased by the outcome of this trial..Iolaus and Hercules friendship is still in danger..Believe me..the Renegade Q is ruthless and he will try again...we must be vigilent....said Q...

The Renegade Q reappears in front of Q and Chang..."I will be back Q...This time I will have a foolproof plan on getting rid of Iolaus once and for all...after all..he does have a record..no...Iolaus will NOT finish the Academy and I will make sure he breaks probation and goes to jail...I will destroy your precious Starfleet..brother dearest...COUNT ON IT! said the Renegade Q as he laughed manaically disappearing in a blue flash of light.

"Now you understand your mission son, you must stay on Earth..and stay by Iolaus' side..make sure that the Renegade Q does not try anything to hurt Iolaus...you will be an invisible observer..you will only become visible when necessary..go my son.. Young Iolaus and Young Hercules need you...the fate of the Federation, Chang, rests on your shoulders...make sure that Hercules and Iolaus fulfill their destiny...of becoming back to back heroes...of founding Starfleet..I will tell Captain Janeway everything...says Q

"Yes father, I will look after Iolaus..Chang continues...I will make sure that destiny is not disturbed and that Hercules and Iolaus maintain their friendship....a frienship forged by Q.

End
file.